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What the Hague Conference Has Accomplished.

Before this October number of the ADVOCATE of PEACE, which has been delayed on account of the Munich Peace Congress, reaches our readers, the Hague Conference will probably have closed its labors. It is not possible as yet to give an exact account of what the Conference has accomplished, as the final votes have not yet been taken, and the document containing the conventions and declarations which will be submitted to the governments for their approval, has not yet been completed and published. But in a general way a fair estimate can now be made of what has been done, both in positive accomplishments and in the preparation of the way for future accomplishments.

It is difficult to account for the prevailing feeling in this country that the Conference has been a farce, a dead failure, and that no valuable results will come of it. This pessimistic impression, which one finds at every turn, has probably arisen from the meagreness of the reports received, and the fragmentary way in which the work of the committees and the plenary sessions has been given out. It has been increased also by the failure of the Conference to meet the over-sanguine expectations of many, who hoped that the second Hague Conference would relieve the world at once from the immense burdens of militarism, and bring in millennial condi-

tions. It is, of course, disappointing that the Conference has not gone as far as the practical statesmen of the Interparliamentary Union thought it ought to go, but that does not by any means mean dead failure.

In order properly to appreciate what has been done, two things must be distinctly kept in mind. The first is, that this is the first time in history that a general world assembly of this kind has gathered. For the first time the whole body of South American States have met the European nations in a general council. These forty-six powers, occupying the territory of the entire globe, have come together with more or less of their historic prejudices, ill-feeling and suspicions, their various local interests, their racial differences, and their diversified constitutions and legislative methods. That they should have come together at all and their representatives have continued *four months* in the serious and thorough discussion of the problems which concern them in common, is the marvelous thing. They have been, in a practical and experimental way, laying the foundations of their future deliberative and federative union. This has necessarily been slow work, and this preliminary clearing and preparing of ground for the future has necessarily rendered their positive constructive work less abundant than might have been expected if the Conference had been an old and experienced body. They have been unable to move any faster than the slowest and most conservative among them could be induced to go.

We must remember, secondly, that war, unfortunate as this may be, is still in international law a recognized lawful method of dealing with international controversies. This being the case, and many of the difficulties between nations having their source directly or indirectly in war and preparations for it, such a Conference as that at The Hague must necessarily deal in no small measure with questions concerning the conduct of war. These subjects, too, were put foremost in the program. It ought to encourage the friends of peace that the Conference, in all the seemingly endless discussion of the rules and regulations of war, has had distinctly in view the restriction of the area of hostilities, the reduction of the horrors attendant upon war, and the extension and safeguarding of the rights of neutrals and non-combatants as against the pretensions and so-called rights of belligerents. This is distinctly in the direction of peace, and it is the increasingly humane and peace-loving spirit which is

prevailing more and more throughout the world that has compelled the nations to make the attempt to carry on war, when they do so, in a way that will interfere as little as possible with the ordinary rights and pursuits of the people. The same spirit is back of this attempt that in a larger and more advanced way is demanding the arbitration of all international disputes, the creation of a world court, the establishment of a world parliament, and the limitation and reduction of armaments.

Summing up what the Conference has done in this direction, we have: (1) The provision that a distinct declaration of war shall be made before hostilities are begun; (2) the prohibition of the bombardment of unfortified ports and towns and of the dropping of explosives from balloons; (3) the establishment of an international prize court to take the place of the national prize courts which have hitherto judged of the lawfulness of the captures made in war at sea; (4) certain restrictions as to the placing of floating mines in war times so as to endanger neutral commerce; (5) the inviolability of neutral states.

These various provisions, if carried out, will result in greatly restricting war, and the first of them, aided by the commissions of inquires, for which provision has been made, will give time for reflection and the control of passion, and will often prevent war from breaking out at all.

The Conference has provided for the general application of the Red Cross Convention of 1864 to maritime warfare. It has also adopted the American proposal as to the Drago doctrine, namely, that contractual debts shall not be collected by force of arms until arbitration, if accepted by the debtor government, has first been tried. This is not all that Dr. Drago wished, but the agreement which the Conference has reached will, we think, finally dispose of this important question and prevent any recurrence of such disgraceful conduct by strong powers against weak ones as has been frequently witnessed heretofore, particularly in South America.

Even the problem of limitation of armaments, on which no practical conclusion has been reached, has nevertheless been advanced a long stage toward its final solution. It has for the first time been seriously discussed. Its great gravity has been fully recognized. Many of the powers, including at least three of those of the first class, have openly declared themselves in favor of limitation. The Conference has unanimously voted that "this Conference confirms the resolution adopted by the Conference of 1899 regarding the limitation of military burdens, and as military burdens have been considerably augmented in almost all countries since 1899, it declares it is highly desirable to see the governments earnestly resume the study of this question." This vote, passed in all serious-

ness, lays a heavy responsibility on the governments, and if they have any real respect for the men whom they have sent to The Hague, they will at once take the subject up, and appoint a strong commission to study the question and find some form of practical solution, either to be immediately applied or to be brought before the third Hague Conference.

In spite of the fact that so much of the time of the Conference has been consumed in the discussion of the regulation and restriction of war, its really important work has been its study of the constitution of a permanent international court of justice and of the question of a convention of obligatory arbitration. An immense amount of the most thorough and patient study has been given to these subjects. The Conference has accepted the principle of a permanent international court holding regular sessions. But the method of selecting the judges in a way to satisfy both the great and the small powers has been found to involve great difficulties. The subject is still under consideration, and it looks now as if no way out of the difficulty would be found by the Conference, but that the whole question of the selection of the judges and the constitution of the court will be referred to the governments.

On the matter of a treaty of obligatory arbitration, specifying certain classes of cases for reference to the Hague Court, there is apparently an irreconcilable difference among the delegations. Germany and eight other powers are opposed to the principle of obligatory arbitration. The other thirty-seven powers accept it, but as the principle of practical unanimity governs the final decisions, it is not now likely that any convention of obligatory arbitration will be agreed upon. But, nevertheless, the thorough discussion of the subject and the acceptance of the principle by such a large majority of the powers, about four-fifths of them, have greatly advanced the matter and make it certain that at no distant day the nations, or at any rate a large majority of them, will conclude such a treaty.

The Conference seems to have accepted unanimously the proposition for regular periodic meetings of the Hague Conferences hereafter. But it does not seem quite clear from the dispatches what its final decision will be as to how the meetings shall be called, whether by the initiative of some head of government, as heretofore, or by some commission named by the governments, which shall have the calling and arranging for the meetings in charge. The adoption of the principle of periodic conferences is the great thing, the greatest thing that the Conference has done, or could have done. All the rest will follow in time. A periodic congress or parliament of the nations once in existence, with however limited powers, and all the problems of international

interest which now seem so difficult of determination will be gradually solved.

We must reserve further comment until the Conference has concluded its labors.

The Cultivation of Insult.

President Roosevelt has added another to the list of pungent phrases with which he from time to time seeks to emphasize his peculiar views of the nature and dangers of peace, and to support his belief in the omnipotent efficacy of a big navy to maintain peace and to secure for the nation the love, respect and just treatment of other nations. In his speech at Cairo, Ill., on the 3d inst., he used the following language:

"The policy of 'peace with insult' is the very worst policy upon which it is possible to embark, whether for a nation or an individual. This nation is now on terms of the most cordial goodwill with all other nations. Let us make it a prime object of our policy to preserve these conditions. To do so it is necessary on the one hand to mete out a generous justice to all other peoples and show them courtesy and respect, and on the other hand, as we are yet a good way off from the millennium, to keep ourselves in such shape as to make it evident to all men that we desire peace because we think it is just and right, and not from motives of weakness or timidity."

This is only saying, in another form, what the President has said during the past four or five years nearly every time that he has made an important speech. But this time his language is peculiarly unfortunate. "Peace with insult" is a hard phrase for the President of the nation to employ when speaking of our relations with other friendly nations. If the words have, in his mouth, any more than a mere rhetorical significance, they must mean either that in his opinion some nation, or nations, has already been insulting us or is clearly manifesting the disposition to do so at the first favorable opportunity. Else why does he use the pungent phrase in support of his wish for the building up of a big navy, a navy strong enough to parry hostile attacks by "hitting"?

It is an unfortunate way to attempt to preserve the relations of most cordial goodwill" with other nations, which the President says truly now exist, to talk of them as if they had no cordial goodwill toward us, but were keeping a keen lookout for a chance to insult us. How far short does this come of being an actual and open insult to them?

One could not, if he tried, find in our history more than one or two instances of anything like insult towards us by a foreign power, and the war into which we fell on one of these occasions is now nearly universally confessed to have been a serious blunder, if not worse. It might have been entirely avoided by a little more patience and self-possession. Much less likely is any nation in the future to offer us anything like an insult. That day has gone by; the nations now universally respect and honor us,

and complain of us only when, in our might, we forget to be just and generous.

The President asks "that the nation, as a whole, show substantially the same qualities that we should expect an honorable man to show in dealing with his fellows." That is the truth, splendidly said. But an honorable man, in dealing with his fellows, is not quick to suspect or resent insult; indeed, he refuses generally to see one at all, and above all he does not go about talking of his neighbors as if he suspected them of continually concocting insults against him and warning them that he is filling his pockets ever fuller and fuller with pocket artillery that he may be ready at any moment to "hit." This is the conduct which is expected of a gentleman even in this day, when, as the President thinks, we are so far from the millennium. This is the conduct therefore, according to the President's own code, which we have a right to expect from a nation which calls itself civilized and Christian.

The argument used by the President at Cairo leads precisely the other way. It should convince everybody that the proper way to promote and maintain terms of cordial goodwill with all other nations is to reduce the navy to the lowest possible minimum, to "mete out a generous justice to all other peoples," to "show them courtesy and respect," to cease to throw out unfounded suspicions of evil intentions on their part, and to declare, to the utmost extent possible, our belief in their goodwill and respect for us.

The policy of the cultivation of insult, by suspecting it, by daring it and uttering sharp warnings against it, "is the very worst policy upon which it is possible to embark whether for a nation or an individual." It is the way of hatred and strife and war; of international division and exclusiveness,—with which the world ought long ago to have done.

The Sixteenth International Peace Congress.

The Sixteenth International Peace Congress, held at Munich from the 9th to the 14th of September, has given, in its own way, another proof of the remarkable rapidity with which the movement for the suppression of war is gaining ground.

The Congress, of which we give elsewhere a more extended account, was, both in numbers and in moral force and enthusiasm, successful beyond expectation. No such meeting had before been held in Southeastern Germany. The number of persons in that region who had come into touch with the movement or who knew anything definite of its character and progress was small. It would not have been surprising, therefore, if the Congress had met with indifference or positive neglect.

Ten years before, the Peace Congress had been held in Hamburg, the commercial metropolis of